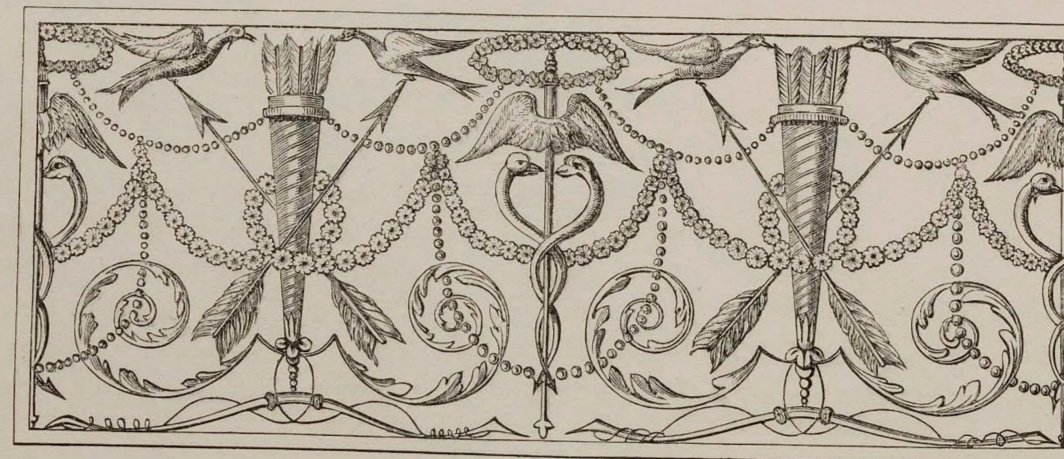


succeeded to the charge of the works at St. Peter's under Bernini, with whom he very shortly quarrelled. From his fervid imagination and rare facility as a draughtsman and designer, he soon obtained ample employment; and in his capricious vagaries, every tendency to extravagance that Bernini's style possessed Borromini contrived to caricature. Until near his death, in 1667, he continued sedulously occupied in subverting all known principles of order and symmetry, not only to his own enrichment, but to the admiration of the leaders of fashion of the day. The anomalies he introduced into design, the disproportionate mouldings, broken, contrasted, and re-entering curves, interrupted and crooked lines and surfaces, became the *mode* of the day, and all Europe was speedily busy in devising similar enormities. In France the fever raged speedily, and the popular style, in place of the quaint but picturesque forms to be seen in the engravings of Du Cerceau, 1576—substituted the more elaborate, but less agreeable ones to be found in Marot, 1727—and Mariette 1726-7. Borromini's works, which were published in the year 1725—and Bibiena's, which were not much purer, and which were given to the world in 1740—had a large circulation, and tended to confirm the public taste in facility and elaboration *versus* simplicity and beauty. Despite this debasing influence, many of the French artists of the time, both of Louis XIV. and XV., in the midst of their extravagance, made many beautiful ornamental designs, showing in them a sense of capricious beauty of line rarely surpassed. In some of Le Pautre's designs (reign of Louis XIV.), this quality may be recognised, as well as in many of the interior decorations given in Blondel's works published during the reign of Louis XV.

De Neufforge is, however, the master of the ceremonies in this latter court of revels, and does sufficiently graceful fooling in the 900 plates comprised in his great body of Ornament. To dwell upon individuals among the mass of clever ornamental designers, draughtsmen, and engravers, to whom the Grand Monarque and the brilliant court of his successor gave good pay and plenty of work, would be out of place here. There is one, however, Jean Berain, who cannot be passed over, seeing that he held the special appointment of "Dessinateur des Menus Plaisirs du Roi" (Louis XIV.), and that to him we are indebted for the best designs which will render the name of Buhl famous so long



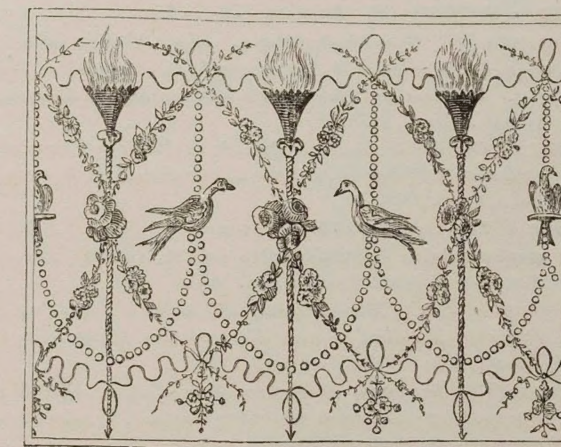
Frieze Ornament, Louis Seize, by Fay.

as a taste for beautiful furniture exists. He contributed materially to the decoration of the Galerie d'Apollon of the Louvre, and of the State apartments in the Tuileries, as is elegantly testified in a work published in the year 1710. Another large collection of his admirably sportive designs was engraved by Daigremont, Scotin, and others. With the advent of Louis XV. to the throne in 1715—the manner of designing grew far more "rococo" and "baroque" than it had been during the greatest part of his predecessor's reign. In spite of the fine talents and good example set by the architect Soufflot in his works, the twisted and foliated scrolls and shells of the former grew into

the "rocaille" and grotto-work of the latter; degenerating at last into all the eccentricities of "Chinoiserie." From this style of approaching inanition, ornament revived under Louis XVI. to an elegant though liny style, corresponding in some degree to that introduced into this country by Robert Adams, principally in his buildings in the Adelphi. The genius of three very able men exercised a beneficial influence over industrial design at a period shortly preceding the Revolution—Reisner, the cabinet-maker, celebrated for his exquisite marquetry; Gouthier, brass-chaser to Marie Antoinette; and Demontreuil, carver in wood to the royal family. During the Revolution Chaos reigned, and out of it came order in the shape of an utter abjuration of the "colifichets" of the Monarchy in favour of the Republican severity of a David. As the Republic, however, ripened into



Panel suitable for Reisner Marquetry, designed by Fay.



Frieze style, Louis Seize, by Fay.

the Empire, the "mode" from stern Republican grew magnificent Imperialist. The best artists were liberally employed by Napoleon I., and the talent of Percier, Fontaine, Normand, Fragonard, Prudhon, and Cavelier, developed in its highest perfection the graceful and learned, but stiff and cold, "style de l'Empire." With the Restoration, the antique went out of fashion, and confusion again ensued. The native ability of the country, however, aided by judicious and liberally conducted educational institutions, soon revived the public interest, and an enthusiasm for rivals of a somewhat archæological nature supervened. The monuments of the middle ages and of the Renaissance were cared for, sought for, restored, and imitated on all hands; and out of the manifold studies so made, styles of eclectic character, but approaching originality, are rapidly forming themselves throughout the country.

France is, it must be confessed, at the present time, master of the field in the distribution and execution of ornament of almost every class; but so rapid and hopeful is the progress now taking place in this country, that it is by no means impossible that an historian writing some few years hence may, happily, be enabled to place the Allies, as they should be, upon a footing of equality.

M. DIGBY WYATT.